IN THE CLAIMS

Please replace the claims as filed with the claims set forth below.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for treating drinking water comprising:

a) providing raw water to a process tank;

b) adding an ion-exchange resin to the process tank to form a raw water/ion-exchange resin mixture; ~~and~~

c) removing treated water from the process tank through a membrane filter, wherein said process tank contains said membrane filter; and

d) regenerating the ion-exchange resin in the process tank.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the ion-exchange resin is a magnetic ion-exchange resin.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising agitating the raw water/ion-exchange resin mixture sufficiently to maintain the ion-exchange resin in suspension.

4. Cancelled.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~The method of claim 2 further comprising~~A method for treating drinking water comprising:

a) providing raw water to a process tank;

b) adding a magnetic ion-exchange resin to the process tank to form a raw water/magnetic ion-exchange resin mixture;

c) removing treated water from the process tank through a membrane filter, wherein said process tank contains said membrane filter; and

d) separating the magnetic ion-exchange resin from the raw water/magnetic ion-exchange resin mixture using a high gradient magnetic filter.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5 further comprising regenerating the magnetic ion-exchange resin.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 further comprising providing the regenerated magnetic ion-exchange resin to the process tank.

8. (Original) The method of claim 6 wherein the regenerating step is performed in an external counter current column.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 wherein the regenerating step is performed in the process tank by adding a ~~saline solution~~regenerant to the process tank.

10. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for treating drinking water comprising:

a process tank for receiving raw water;

an ion-exchange resin supply operatively associated with the process tank to provide ion-exchange resin to raw water within the process tank; ~~and~~

a membrane filter operatively associated with the process tank and contained within the process tank for separating particulate matter from treated water removed from the process tank through the membrane filter; and

a regenerant supply operatively associated with the process tank, the regenerant supply providing regenerant for regeneration of the ion-exchange resin within the process tank.

11. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 10 further comprising a resin separator ~~operatively associated~~in selective liquid communication with the process tank for recovering regenerated ion-exchange resin from an ion-exchange resin/regenerant solution~~raw water~~ mixture.

12. (Original) The apparatus of claim 11 wherein the ion-exchange resin is a magnetic ion-exchange resin and the resin separator is a high gradient magnetic filter.

13. Cancelled.

14. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim ~~13~~ 11 further comprising means for conveying regenerated ion-exchange resin from the resin ~~regenerator~~ separator to the ion-exchange resin supply.

15. Cancelled.

16. (Currently Amended) The apparatus of claim 10 further comprising an aerator in the process tank for agitating ~~an ion-exchange resin/raw water mixture in~~the contents of the process tank.

17. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein step (d) comprises adding a regenerant to the process tank.

18. (New) The method of claim 17 further comprising separating regenerated ion-exchange resin from the regenerant.

19. (New) The method of claim 17 wherein the ion-exchange resin is a magnetic ion-exchange resin, the method further comprising separating the ion-exchange resin from the regenerant using high a gradient magnetic filter.

20. (New) The method of claim 18 wherein following separating the regenerated ion-exchange resin from the regenerant, the regenerated ion-exchange resin is added to the process tank in step (b).

21. (New) The method of claim 17 wherein the regenerant is a saline solution.

22. (New) The method of claim 5 wherein the regenerant is a saline solution.

23. (New) The apparatus of claim 10 wherein the regenerant is a saline solution.